

VZCZCXRO5348

PP RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMA RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHROV

DE RUEHNJ #1383/01 3380909

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

P 040909Z DEC 06 ZUI RUEHSW SVC (CORRECTED COPY TAGS LINE)

FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4642

INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 1331

RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY 0882

RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI PRIORITY 1257

RUEHKKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 0369

RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY 0372

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0934

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NDJAMENA 001383

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [SU](#) [UNSC](#) [CD](#) [KPKO](#)

SUBJECT: DPKO STILL FORMULATING PLAN FOR EASTERN CHAD
DEPLOYMENT

REF: N'DJAMENA 01378

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1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Ambassador and Poloff met with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Technical Assessment Mission (TAM) on December 1 and 2, before and after a meeting between the TAM and President Deby. The TAM reported that Deby had agreed in principle to deployment of UN forces in eastern Chad, but raised fundamental questions about the nature and mandate of the force. The TAM will depart Chad December 3 without having visited the eastern border region and will accordingly make only preliminary recommendations to the Security Council for an eventual UN presence in eastern Chad and Central African Republic (CAR), pursuant to paragraph 9(d) of UN Security Council Resolution 1706. DPKO Assistant-Secretary-General (A/SYG) Hedi Annabi posited that any force in Chad and CAR would be "separate yet integrated" into the eventual Darfur operation. Annabi did not offer much insight into DPKO's thinking on the mandate of the Chad force beyond warning that the more involved in border security the force was intended to be, the heavier the UN footprint that would be required. The diplomatic community present at the December 1 briefing stressed that no sustainable security solution in Chad was possible without a parallel political process, a point agreed between the Ambassador and Annabi in their private December 2 meeting. END SUMMARY.

TAM'S WORK IN CHAD IS DONE FOR NOW

2. (SBU) DPKO A/SYG Annabi told a December 1 gathering of the diplomatic community that the TAM's work in Chad would be incomplete on account of recent instability in the eastern border region, which had prevented the team's travel there. Annabi admitted that the recommendations the TAM planned to present to the Security Council before the end of December for an eventual UN presence in Chad and CAR would be only preliminary and that another assessment visit would eventually be required to develop a proper concept of operations.

3. (SBU) Annabi reported a productive meeting with CAR President Bozize, who had confirmed that anti-government rebels re-captured the northeastern town of Birao. Annabi noted that Bozize had been unambiguous in his support for a UN presence in CAR, despite equivocation on the part of President Deby.

¶4. (SBU) In a private meeting December 2 with the Ambassador, Annabi described his 90-minute discussion earlier in the day with President Deby on the TAM's visit. Annabi expressed frustration at what he speculated was either Deby's "lack of knowledge about how the UN works" or his "not wanting to upset le guide (COL Qadhafi)" during their conversation about a UN presence in Chad. First, Deby had insisted, as he had in a November 29 meeting with the Ambassador (reftel), that the most urgent priority in ensuring security in the east was to immediately re-locate the refugee camps away from the border. Deby had then raised the possibility of deploying the same type of hybrid force in Chad as was being contemplated for Darfur, a possibility which Annabi dismissed. Deby went on to ask if the UN envisioned integrating its presence with the Chadian armed forces under a single Chadian commander, again dismissed by Annabi. Finally, Deby had raised concerns that the eventual deployment would infringe upon GOC sovereignty and territorial integrity.

¶5. (SBU) While Annabi acknowledged Deby's comments were reminiscent of those made by Sudanese President Bashir regarding UN deployment in Darfur, Annabi deemed that Deby understood his message by the end of their meeting and took Deby's agreement in principle to UN forces as a positive sign of GOC support. Nevertheless, he recommended that "pedagogic work" remained to be done to ensure Deby remained engaged on the process of UN deployment in Chad. Annabi tried to broach the topic of political dialogue with President Deby to no avail. The diplomatic community present at the December 1 briefing stressed that no sustainable security solution in Chad was possible without a parallel political process, a point agreed between the Ambassador and Annabi in their private December 2 meeting.

MANDATE OPTIONS

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¶6. (SBU) Annabi described two possible goals for UN deployment in Chad: one, to contribute to the creation of an environment that would improve the security situation in the refugee camps and internally displaced persons (IDPs) zones; or two, to establish a highly mobile border force along principal access routes that would deter cross-border attacks. To accomplish these goals, Annabi outlined three major options for a UN presence in eastern Chad and CAR. The "light" option envisioned by DPKO would station unarmed monitors on the ground. Annabi warned that this option would provide only a limited number of personnel, would be insufficient to protect affected populations and would run the risk of suffering reduced credibility as had AMIS in Darfur. The "medium" option would station troops in three principal locations in Chad's eastern border region, as well as in one location in northeastern CAR, and would also include a police contingent to assist local authorities in protecting civil society. The "big" option would be an ambitious peacekeeping operation geared at stopping by force cross-border attacks and weapons flows. To carry out such a preventative mission would require a Chapter VII mandate, as well as significant personnel and financial resources, none of which were assured, Annabi admitted.

¶7. (SBU) Annabi acknowledged that even the "medium" option would require time to stand up, noting deployment of 10,000 UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) forces in southern Sudan had taken over one year to complete. Annabi added that another Security Council resolution would be necessary to articulate force size and mandate of the Chad operation. Annabi mentioned the traditional difficulties associated with generating Francophone troop contributors. He also flagged the absence of political stability in Chadian as an additional impediment to troop-contributing countries' commitment and as a less-than-ideal condition under which a UN operation could deploy, given no clear indication of an eventual exit strategy.

18. (SBU) In his private meeting with the Ambassador, Annabi sought our input on what an eventual UN presence in Chad and CAR could look like and our analysis of the current security situation in eastern Chad. Annabi noted that the UN typically made up for what it lacked in military sophistication by putting more "boots on the ground," which he suspected would be the case if the Security Council were to eventually authorize a heavy UN presence on the Chad-Sudan border. Annabi was firm that any force be highly mobile and come equipped with air assets. He speculated that a quick-reaction capability would be useful for intervening in the face of inter-ethnic conflicts in the southeast border region, were the force's mandate to assign it this responsibility. Annabi was concerned about the issue of how a force would be perceived by Chadian rebels, stressing that it would need to make clear to all parties within Chad - government and rebel alike - the provisions of its mandate so as to be seen as neutral.

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